

## State Commission

OneStar Foundation's mission is to connect partners and resources to build a stronger nonprofit sector in Texas. As Texas' state service commission, OneStar administers \$13.8 million in federal funding per year to an impressive portfolio of 26 AmeriCorps State programs, supporting 2,234 AmeriCorps Texas members across more than 500 partner sites, primarily in the field of education. AmeriCorps Texas is an effective public-private partnership: in 2015-16, AmeriCorps Texas programs received \$13.8 million in federal AmeriCorps funding, but raised an additional \$28.7 million in local match funding as a result – a more than 200 percent matching rate. Collectively in 2015-16, OneStar's AmeriCorps Texas members provided direct services to 95,019 children and youth, 19,052 adults, and leveraged 10,731 additional community volunteers to aid in four major disasters, including the Texas Memorial Day Floods, Eagle Pass Floods, Hidden Pines Wildfires, and Central Texas Halloween Floods. OneStar also operates a statewide, 30-member AmeriCorps VISTA Intermediary Project, the VolunteerTX portal, and Texas Connector, a robust, award-winning nonprofit geo-mapping tool.

## AmeriCorps State

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley AmeriCorps program serves communities along the southernmost tip of Texas in the Rio Grande Valley. The university is the newly-formed merger of two historic Hispanic Serving Institutions (UT-Brownsville and UT-Pan American), and is engaging 100 of its students each year as AmeriCorps College Mentors. The mentors provide direct, near-peer college access services to 2,500 low-income, first-generation high school seniors. They help the high school students enroll in post-secondary schools and fill out financial aid applications. The AmeriCorps members serve in the Brownsville, Point Isabel, and Los Fresnos Independent School Districts, as well as in local organizations. It is expanding into Hidalgo County in 2016, which will double the program's impact and reach. When they complete the program, 65 percent of students served by the AmeriCorps members enroll in two- or four-year accredited post-secondary schools, helping break the cycle of poverty.

For nearly 20 years, the Amarillo Independent School District AmeriCorps program has worked to fulfill its core mission to graduate every student prepared for success beyond high school. The AmeriCorps tutoring program was created as a way to directly support the district's most at-risk students. The AmeriCorps members, who are local high school and college students, provide direct, intensive literacy tutoring; they also gain valuable skills and have an opportunity to give back to the community. The program has 55 high school and college student AmeriCorps members who tutor more than 300 at-risk Pre-K through 5th grade students in reading. They use the evidence-based Response-to-Intervention Model to meet each student's specific needs through a three-tiered instructional process. Of the program's K-5 students who are tutored in reading, 82 percent make grade level gains. Since the program began in 1999, student academic success has risen in all participating elementary schools, improving outcomes for hundreds of at-risk students in Amarillo.

## AmeriCorps National

Citizen Schools is a nonprofit organization that partners with middle schools to expand the learning day for children in low-income communities. Its AmeriCorps members serve in Houston public schools, leading real-world learning projects, providing academic support, and helping all students discover and achieve their dreams. In their two years of service, AmeriCorps members serve as Teaching Fellows, giving students months of extra learning through academic mentoring and skill-building apprenticeships that translates into college readiness and career opportunities. Citizen Schools has been recognized as a leader in engaging volunteers, generating student impact, and balancing direct service with systemic change efforts. Students who are supported by Citizen Schools graduated from high school within four years at a rate of 71 percent, compared to 59 percent among matched peers, and 61 percent of Citizen Schools' alumni enroll in college.

In Dallas and San Antonio, City Year AmeriCorps engages 166 members who serve full-time at 14 schools, helping more than 14,192 students at greatest risk of dropping out. AmeriCorps Members work alongside teachers, using research-based tools to improve students' attendance, behavior, and performance in math and English. The members also lead afterschool programs and school-wide initiatives to improve school culture. In San Antonio, 98 percent of teachers agree that City Year AmeriCorps members provide essential academic support for students that they wouldn't otherwise receive and 100 percent of principals agree that the program improves students' active engagement in learning.

College Advising Corps has 59 AmeriCorps members serving full-time as college advisors at 59 high schools in Austin, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Houston, Irving, Arlington, Mesquite, Brownsville, Katy, Grand Prairie, Duncanville, Cypress, Richardson, Bryan, and Pasadena. The AmeriCorps members are placed in underserved high schools and increase the number of low-income, first-generation, and under-represented students who enter and complete higher education. The members provide the counsel and encouragement that students need to navigate the college admissions process. AmeriCorps members help students plan their college searches, complete admissions and financial aid applications, and enroll at schools that will serve them well. In 2015, these 59 AmeriCorps members served more than 20,000 students, have met with students 89,897 times, and have helped students submit 39,992 college applications. They also helped students amass more than \$21 million in scholarships and institutional aid for the coming school year.

Youth Volunteer Corps has two AmeriCorps members who began serving in Arlington in July 2015. The program is focused on developing local roots and establishing their presence in the community so that it can engage youth – especially disadvantaged youth – in service to local agencies. These efforts will strengthen both the youth and the local agencies.

## AmeriCorps VISTA

In South Texas, the Texas A&M International University AmeriCorps VISTA Project works to coordinate and manage Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites. In addition, the VISTA Project focuses on increasing the financial literacy and independence of people who live in the South Texas region, one of the poorest regions in the country. In the past year, AmeriCorps VISTA member Karen Duran recruited and trained community volunteers as tax preparers at 20 VITA sites in Laredo and Webb County. In 2015, these community volunteers prepared a total of 118 tax returns, with more than \$114,000 being refunded to South Texas taxpayers.

In 2014, Tatiana Nchotu moved from Maryland to rural Knox County – population 3,719 – to serve as an AmeriCorps VISTA member with Big Country Area Health Education Center. As the member serving Knox County, Tatiana has an office at the County Courthouse and works closely with the Knox County Judge and local community leaders to assess community health needs and identify solutions. In the beginning of her term, Tatiana conducted a comprehensive asset map as part of the program's Asset Based Community Development Strategies project. During the past year, Tatiana worked with the local Agrilife Extension Agent to develop and implement the Learn, Grow, Eat, and GO! Program. Tatiana recruited and trained community volunteers, including teachers and local farmers, to pilot the program with 14 fourth grade students. In support of this initiative, Tatiana applied for, and received, a grant of \$1,500 for a community garden. The students and volunteers grow yellow squash, three types of tomatoes, cucumbers, and okra. Knox County plans to expand the Learn, Grow, Eat and GO! Program to two additional elementary schools in the next year.

## AmeriCorps NCCC

All Hands Volunteers addresses the immediate and long-term needs of communities impacted by natural disasters by engaging and leveraging volunteers, partner organizations, and local communities. All Hands aims to demonstrate the power and value of volunteerism through the tangible work done, the hope it brings to suffering communities, and the transformative experiences it provides for volunteers. The City of Rosenberg was heavily impacted by storms and flooding in the early summer of 2015, and All Hands Volunteers requested the support of an AmeriCorps NCCC team to help meet the community's needs. AmeriCorps NCCC members spent their round primarily mucking and gutting homes to ensure the removal of mold spores from homes the area, using tools such as the circular saw, reciprocating saw, sledge hammers, and chalk lines along the way. This service not only helped to alleviate potential future health concerns that could affect the families further down the road, but also eliminated labor hours and could potentially save each family thousands of dollars over the life of the reconstruction process.

NECHAMA is a voluntary organization that provides natural disaster preparedness, response, and recovery services nationwide. After devastating floods affected thousands of residents in Texas in the early summer of 2015, NECHAMA requested the support of an AmeriCorps NCCC team. Over three weeks, the AmeriCorps team served on a total of eight houses affected by the flooding in both the Wimberley and Houston, Texas areas, where they worked to gut (remove trim, molding, sheetrock, insulation, nails, carpet and electrical fixtures) eight separate houses that were severely damaged by the flood. Two of the three houses were gutted from top to bottom. In Wimberley, the team learned the importance of getting the mold out of homes early. However, when they arrived in Houston, the team served homeowners who had not yet started gutting their homes, where they were shocked to see moldy homes still untouched. AmeriCorps NCCC had the honor of serving elderly, disabled, or economically challenged individuals who had nowhere else to turn for assistance in recovering.

## Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

To celebrate the Foster Grandparent Program's 50th anniversary, staff from the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS), a sponsor of eight FGP component sites in Texas, donated more than 1,400 children's books to the Foster Grandparents serving in their program. Some of the books will be given as gifts to the students being served and others will be used by the Foster Grandparents in the classroom. In the past year, the DADS FGP program has provided nearly 500,000 hours of service to 1,778 children with special needs in Austin, Abilene, Corpus Christi, Denton, Mexia, Lubbock, Richmond, Lufkin and their immediate surrounding areas.

## Senior Corps RSVP

Velma and Frank Smith are a dynamic duo of RSVP volunteers sponsored by the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center serving at Grimes Health Resource Center in Navasota. Grimes Health Resource Center provides transportation for homebound seniors and disabled persons. Clients are eligible for transportation to doctor appointments, pharmacies, or grocery stores in Navasota and the Bryan/College Station area. In the past year, Frank and Velma have served more than 400 hours providing transportation for their clients, often covering as many as 300 miles during the course of a day. Frank and Velma also provide much-needed human interaction for their clients, who would otherwise be socially isolated. Frank and Velma not only volunteer with Grimes Health Resource Center but also at Community Computer Ministry (CCM), another RSVP Volunteer Station in Grimes County. They became involved with CCM after their beloved son passed away in 2007. They donated their son's office equipment to CCM to help the agency achieve its mission of teaching older citizens computer literacy. CCM Director Emily Thomas estimates that more than 200 seniors have benefitted from the Smiths' generous donation. Velma and Frank are very involved in the Navasota community where Frank has served as president of the local AARP Chapter. The Smiths also volunteer periodically at the Sunshine Senior Center in Anderson, Texas. They will be eligible for RSVP ten-year service awards in 2017; but, according to Velma, the greatest reward for volunteering comes in the form of hugs from grateful clients.

## Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

In Dallas, ten Senior Companions from The Senior Source have provided more than 4,000 hours of in-home care to 15 veterans and their families this year. One of these veterans is 88-year-old Tuskegee Airman Homer Hogues. Mr. Hogues' wife of 65 years needed help caring for him and reached out to their church which, in turn, referred them to The Senior Source. Louise Scott, a Senior Companion for more than 20 years, started working with Mr. Hogues in 2014. They often look through albums and discuss his service as a Tuskegee Airman. The Hogues' daughter, Barbara, credits the Senior Companion Program for giving her peace of mind to ensure her father exercises, eats well, and has companionship. Mr. Hogues started working as an airplane mechanic in Tuskegee, Ala., and transferred to Lockland Air Force Base before moving to Dallas. Originally he was drafted to Korea to help clean up after the war. As Barbara states, "He felt like as a black man he could stay here and clean up. He wanted to do more." It's a message he shares with children: "You are responsible for your own future. You have to say, 'I want to do more.'"

## Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) transforms lives by using evidence to find what works and make it work for more people. The SIF Classic and SIF Pay for Success programs harness the expertise of grant-making intermediaries to identify, evaluate, and expand effective nonprofits serving low-income communities across America. The SIF programs throughout the state focus on areas such as the improvement of health outcomes and workforce development. In the past year, San Antonio Housing Authority's Jobs Plus program placed 169 public housing residents in jobs. United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County's SaveUSA program enrolled 899 participants, the most ever, who deposited more than a half million dollars in savings accounts. The Social Innovation Fund is investing \$398,924 and is expanding the impact of 21 nonprofits in Texas.